(c) if so, the share of this failure attributable to public sector and private sector separately; and

(d) what are the reasons for this shortfall?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) (a) No, Sir. The production of finished carbon-steel reached an all time high of 22.72 million tonnes during 1996-97, recording an increase of 6.17% over the previous year.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Removal of freight equalisation system

605. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether leading steel producers in the country viz. SAIL, TISCO and RINL have sought total removal of freight equalisation system on iron and steel;

(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item in 'Business Telegraph' dated 17th June, 1997 on this issue; and

(c) if yes, the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) (a) to (c) A Committee has been constituted to study the impact of partial withdrawal of frieght equalisation scheme on consumption, availability and use of various categories of steel in different parts of the country. Main producers, viz., SAIL, TISCO and VSP, have made representations to the Committee, which is chaired by the Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel. The Government is yet to receive the report of the Committee.

Financial Irregularities in Bokaro Steel Plant

606. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there have been some inancial irregularities in the Bokaro Steel Plant during the past two to three years;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted into the matter; and

(d) if yes, what are the results thereof and action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.